

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05280 110113Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 NIC-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01 AID-20 IO-14 EB-11 DRC-01

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R 101551Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7732

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, VS

SUBJECT: PRAVDA OBSERVER ON AID TO VIETNAM

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. PRAVDA'S VETERAN POLITICAL OBSERVER YURI ZHUKOV
TURNS HIS PEN TO PROVING IN LENGTHY ARTICLE APRIL 10
THAT KEEPING THE THIEU GOVERNMENT AFLOAT IN SVN IS,
IN THE WORDS OF PRAVDA'S HEADLINE, A "HOPELESS CAUSE."
ZHUKOV REPORTS GLEEFULLY THE APRIL 3 SENATE COMMITTEE
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VOTE WHICH HALVED THE ADMINISTRATION FY-74 SUPPLEMENTAL

FOR MILITARY AID TO GVN. HE GOES ON TO CITE SUCH VARIED SOURCES AS SAN FRANCISCO BIMONTHLY "PACIFIC BASIN REPORTS" AND WALL STREET JOURNAL TO SHOW THAT ECONOMY OF SVN IS IN BAD SHAPE AND GROWING WORSE.

2. ZHUKOV CRIBS MOST OF HIS MATERIAL, HOWEVER, FROM RECENT LE MONDE ACCOUNT OF SECRET PARIS MEETING LAST OCTOBER FOR PURPOSE OF SETTING UP VIETNAM AID GROUP. AS ZHUKOV TELLS IT, BANKERS AND BUSINESSMEN ARE INCREASINGLY SKEPTICAL OF PROSPECTS OF "THIEU REGIME" AND ARE CONSEQUENTLY RELUCTANT TO INVEST. IRONICALLY, ZHUKOV SEEMS TO ACCEPT THE BASIC PREMISE THAT FOREIGN INVESTMENT IS WHAT SVN NEEDS AT THIS STAGE. HE MAKES THE POINT THAT EXISTENCE OF TWO ZONES OF CONTROL AND TWO "GOVERNMENTS" IS FURTHER CLOUD ON INVESTMENT HORIZON, SINCE PROPOSED LEASING OF OFFSHORE OIL CONCESSIONS (FOR EXAMPLE) IS SUPPOSEDLY SUBJECT TO LEGAL CHALLENGE IF DONE UNILATERALLY BY GVN.

3. COMMENT: ZHUKOV HAS MORE LATITUDE THAN RUN-OF-MILL SOVIET COMMENTATORS, AND HE HAS ALWAYS MAINTAINED A HIGH INTEREST IN VIETNAM. FOR THESE REASONS, HIS INFERENCE THAT GVN MAY COLLAPSE FOR LACK OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE CONSENSUS VIEW IN MOSCOW. IT DOES HAVE THE ADVANTAGE, HOWEVER, OF JUSTIFYING THE RATHER LOW PROFILE MOSCOW HAS MAINTAINED ON MOST VIETNAM ISSUES SINCE THE PARIS AGREEMENT.

4. ONE SURPRISING ASPECT OF ZHUKOV'S COMMENT IS HIS FAILURE TO EXPLOIT CURRENT PRESS DISCUSSION OF AMBASSADOR MARTIN'S VIEWS ON AID. WE ASSUME THIS WAS RULED OUT IN DEFERENCE TO U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL STABILITY, FOREIGN INVESTMENT, ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOSCOW05280
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740083-0090
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740452/aaaabuzj.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <06-Aug-2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRAVDA OBSERVER ON AID TO VIETNAM CINCPAC FOR POLAD
TAGS: PFOR, UR, VS, (ZHUKOV, YURI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005